

Social Media Use

The City of Westfield seeks to engage with our residents wherever they are. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media channels. While social media affords us a tremendous opportunity to interact with our publics, it also presents challenges.

Major corporations – such as [Walmart](#) and [IBM](#) – have created social media policies for use within their organizations and for their consumers. These policies often spell out the overall mission of the organization, rules of etiquette and conduct, customer response policies and branding guidelines. Government institutions and public officials, however, have struggled with how best to use social media, and these failures can lead to [embarrassing public relations issues](#). The Institute for Local Government also documents [legal issues for government agencies](#) regarding social media.

This document is designed to serve as a “best practices” guide for social media communication between city departments and members of the public.

Definition

“Social media” refers to any digital technology used to communicate and share information. Social media takes the form of text, images and video communication.

General guidelines

All city of Westfield social media sites will be subject to review by the city’s communications director. Departments with social media channels will designate staff to oversee and maintain the integrity of those pages. Only authorized agents may post content to social media pages on behalf of a department.

The best, most appropriate city of Westfield uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:

- As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
- As marketing/promotional channels which increase the city's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

Wherever possible, all city of Westfield social media sites shall comply with all appropriate city of Westfield policies and standards

Do not use a city email address when using social media in personal capacities. For example, don’t create a personal Facebook or Twitter account using your westfield.in.gov email address. If you identify yourself as a city of Westfield employee when conducting personal social media activities, consider stating in your profile that your comments are not representative of city of Westfield government.

Examples include:

Twitter bio: *Tweets are my own.*

Blog or website bio: *While I work for the city of Westfield, anything I publish is my personal opinion and not necessarily the opinions or position of city government.*

Rules of engagement

Westfield's social media channels are public forums. As such, residents, visitors, business owners, educators, etc. are free to express their views. However, consistent enforcement of rules regarding posted content will ensure that Westfield's social media channels remain a safe place for meaningful dialogue. Therefore, the following forms of content posted by external and authorized users may be subject to removal if they contain:

1. Profane language or content;
2. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination of protected classes;
3. Content not topically relevant to the original post;
4. Sexual harassment content;
5. Solicitations of commerce or advertisements including promotion or endorsement;
6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
8. Content intended to defame any person, group or organization;
9. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as trademark or copyright infringement;
10. Making or publishing of false, vicious or malicious statements concerning any employee, the County or its operations;
11. Violent or threatening content;
12. Disclosure of confidential, sensitive or proprietary information

Correct it, don't delete it

The internet abounds with individuals whose sole purpose seems to be to disrupt discussions, often through irrational and emotional invectives. The conservative approach to these posts is to NOT delete them. Correct any misinformation in a professional manner and let viewers evaluate the merits of the information as presented.

Miscellaneous

All city social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies. The city's Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. The city of Westfield reserves the right to terminate any city of Westfield social media site at any time without notice.

